



Food for Thought

Fairfax County Health Department
10777 Main St., Suite 111
Fairfax, VA 22030
703-246-2444
703-591-6435 TTY
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/food

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Food Safety Reminders

- **Wash Hands Often!**
- **Don't handle ready-to-eat foods with bare hands.**
- **Report symptoms of foodborne illness to management.**
- **Food must come from an approved source**
- **Cook foods to proper temperatures.**
- **Use a food thermometer!**
- **Keep hot food HOT - above 135°F**
- **Keep cold foods COLD - below 41°F**
- **Keep foods out of the Danger Zone (41°F-135°F)**
- **Wash, rinse and sanitize food contact surfaces regularly**
- **Wash Hands Often!**

2011 was the year of the Employee Health Policy. Over the last 12 months, Fairfax County Health Department's Food Safety Program gave information to food service establishments to help them start an Employee Health Policy, as required by the Food Code. The establishments were asked to include the Employee Health Policy in their training for new and experienced food service employees. The Employee Health Policy is an effort to teach food service employees that they have a responsibility to help prevent foodborne illness. Food establishments are required to train employees to recognize the symptoms of foodborne illness and is asked to agree to report foodborne illness symptoms, diagnoses or exposure to management. The employee health policy is also used to help managers and operators understand the difference between *exclusion* and *restriction* if an employee has symptoms of, diagnoses of or exposure to foodborne illness.

The information currently being given to food service operators has been revised to be more user-friendly in 2012. This information will now be packaged in a labeled, red folder for easy identification in the facility. There is now a cover sheet with suggestions on what points should be made during specific parts of the employee training. This cover sheet also explains the purpose of the other handouts to be used in the training. The handout to be used for the foodborne illness training has been simplified, yet it still makes the important points about the seriousness of foodborne illness and what symptoms to look for. The Employee Agreement, used to inform employees of their responsibility to report symptoms of, a diagnosis of or an exposure to foodborne illness, has been made much easier to read and understand. There is now a cover sheet to help explain to managers how the Manager's Decision Guide works.

In the last year, it was observed that 51% of the food service establishments in Fairfax County were in compliance with the Employee Health Policy requirement. Many of the employee health policies were put in place using the information given to them by their area inspector over the past year. In the coming year, it is anticipated that the re-formatted information will be used to bring even more food service establishments into compliance by starting their own Employee Health Policy. The information will be available in various languages during regular inspections and also available on the Food Safety Program website at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/food. If you have any questions about the Employee Health Policy, you may contact the Health Department at 703-246-2444, TTY: 711.

Fats, Oils and Grease Best Management Practices (BMP)

Fats, Oils and Grease (FOG) come from food such as cooking oil, lard, shortening, meat fats, sauces, gravy, mayonnaise, butter, ice cream and soups. When not disposed of properly, FOG can cause blockages in the sanitary sewer. Also, if grease traps and interceptors are not routinely cleaned and maintained, grease can enter the sanitary sewer causing clogged lines, damage to the sewer line or backups into the restaurant. Learn proper disposal of FOG during food preparation, clean up and kitchen maintenance. Please view this link <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/wastewater/industrialwaste/discharge.htm#policies> for detailed instructions. If you have any questions, please call the DPWES - Industrial Waste Section at 703-550-9740, extension 252.

Proper Use of Gloves

Bare-hand contact with ready-to-eat foods can be a contributing factor to the risk of a foodborne illness. The use of single-use, disposable gloves is a very good means of preventing bare-hand contact. It is also a good practice for employees to use disposable gloves when handling raw foods such as ground beef and chicken. Proper use of gloves and proper changing of gloves can be a big help in preventing cross-contamination. Wash hands with soap and water before putting on clean gloves.



While wearing gloves an employee should be limited to a single task requiring the glove use. Gloves become contaminated just like bare hands. When changing tasks, gloves should be removed and changed if necessary. Do not wash gloves! When gloves are changed, hands must be washed before putting on the clean gloves.

There is the potential for contaminating hands and clean gloves while removing the used pair of gloves. With proper glove use and, particularly, proper changing of gloves, the risk of foodborne illness through cross-contamination can be reduced. Are you doing your part?

Training Available

If you feel that your staff would benefit from training on a particular subject, the health department is available to help! Arrangements can be made to meet with a group of employees and present information on many different subjects - proper handwashing, proper cooling methods, proper storage, for example. If you are interested in a training class for your staff, please contact the Health Department at 703-246-2444.

Reminder

If a food facility changes owners, the Health Department Permit to Operate is not transferrable. An application for a new permit must be submitted at least 10 days before the closing date of the sale of the facility. A satisfactory inspection must also be conducted and a permit issued to the new owner *before* closing on the sale of the facility. Contact the Health Department at 703-246-2444 or visit our website for more information.

Kitchen Corner



1. Preventing foodborne illness is only the manager's responsibility. (T or F)
2. There are three parts to a good Employee Health Policy. (T or F)
3. Grease traps are useful in collecting FOG. (T or F)
4. Grease from restaurants can cause the sewer lines in the street to become clogged. (T or F)
5. Restaurants can help prevent FOG problems in the sewer lines by scraping dishes before washing and by cleaning the grease trap regularly. (T or F)
6. It is okay to handle a sandwich with your bare hands when preparing it for the customer. (T or F)
7. Disposable gloves should be used when handling ready-to-eat foods. (T or F)
8. It is not necessary to wash your hands when you change gloves. (T or F)

Answers: 1. F; 2. T; 3. T; 4. T; 5. T; 6. F; 7. T; 8. F

